

Wilton Sewer & Water Commission Minutes - DRAFT
January 24, 2013 at 6:30 PM Building Inspector's Office

Wilton Sewer and Water Commissions held their regular monthly meeting at 6:30 PM in the Building Inspector's Office. Present were Sewer and Water Commission Chairman Jim Tuttle, Sewer and Water Commissioner Tom Schultz, Sewer Commissioner John Jowders, Water Commissioner Dan Hastings, and Clerk Joanna K. Eckstrom. Chairman Tuttle called the meeting to order at 6:31. Sewer department business and items related to both commissions was discussed first followed by Water department business. (Building Inspector John Shepardson was present for part of the meeting.)

Minutes:

On a motion by Tom Schultz, seconded by John Jowders, the minutes from December 27th joint meeting were unanimously approved as written by both commissions.

On a motion by Tom, seconded by Dan Hastings, the minutes of the Water Commission's December 27th public hearing were unanimously approved by the water commissioners.

On a motion by Tom, seconded by John, the minutes of the January 17th joint work session were unanimously approved by both commissions.

Bills / Expenses - Departments reviewed, discussed and approved monthly expenses (bills) as needed.

Invoices to customers (sewer) at 52 Island St (Gilbert) and 23 Island St (Pelkey) for repairs on private property were reviewed. Jim noted that Steve Elliott did not charge the sewer department for many items on Gilbert bill – this is reflected in final amount due from Gilbert. If Town (Steve) does send a bill, there will not be further charges to Gilbert. Copies of commission's calculations made for file. Figures to be given to Pam / Mary in selectmen's office to send official bill to customers.

John Shepardson was concerned that plumbing work was done at Pelkey property without a permit. Sewer commissioners said that Dean Pelkey, now deceased, did his own work years ago; work is not relevant to repairs that sewer department recently did.

Discuss Wilton–Milford Interconnect Project; set meeting with Milford (both commissions).

Jim said this is basically an invitation to Wilton to come see the waste water treatment facility and understand what the sewer department is paying for. The invitation is to both commissions, especially looking ahead to an eventual extension of water service (to Route 101). The commissioners agreed to visit but did not wish to commit to a time on their regular work days. Maybe a weekend ok. Or they will attend one of Milford's regular monthly meetings.

Jim also said re: water interconnect, Dan Dudley from DES called to say that Wilton's number came up (grants or loans). Because our water rates are so low, Wilton only qualifies for loans – ie a \$3.85 million loan (water / sewer revolving funds). Dudley to send original paperwork that Bob Duquette had submitted so that departments have info for any opportunity. If Wilton is **to** pursue a loan, it would have to be voted upon at a Town Meeting – too late for March 2013. Department can wait until next year or consider a special town meeting. There is a question of Milford's commitment to the project; Wilton would need to know more from Milford before pursuing this further.

John J asked how this project affects water system on Main Street. Jim said interconnect involves river crossings, improvements from Hillsborough Mills to Green Bridge on Route 101A. Water lines in town (Main Street) are 100 years old so any interconnect project would have to address these areas. Also, there'd need to be a way to get water up to the tank on Abbot Hill Road so it's a huge undertaking.

Sewer and Water abatements -

The commissioners agreed to a number of abatements on the sewer and water bills due to errors on the most recent bill (read date Sept) issued in December 2012 and due January 11, 2013, bad readings or changes in services. Action is needed as several properties are on the 'shut off' list that Jim just received. Properties discussed were Lowe / Cooley (Forest Rd), Crane (Maple Street), Iannacci (Abbot Hill Rd); Lebaron (Maple St), O'Leary (Maple St), Cassidy (Holt Rd), Magic Mirror (Main St), Scriptor (Eastview), Streeter (Gregg St), VanWinkle (Gibbons Hwy). Wilton Pressed Metal still needs attention per agreement that commissions made last summer.

Tom said he had spoken to Jane Farrell about the reading errors – this was thought to be related to Roger (Tremblay) numbers still in system.

Also discussed were bills for water repairs on private property for Jowders and Childress from 2011. Letters have been prepared (including new bills) to be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. Parties are asked to respond to Jim by cell to get on agenda at Feb. 28th meeting and discuss payment plans. Tom moved, Dan second (for Water department) to approve the letter send certified, rrr – unanimous approval by water commissioners.

Maple Street Project / Bond – sewer

Motion by Tom, second by John to approve a 10 year bond for up to \$225K and pay the \$2500 bond fee from the 'loan interest' line item in the 2013 budget. Sewer department unanimously approved. Also noted is that there will be a 'bond counseling fee', amount to be determined, due upon application.

Also note that bond hearing on Jan. 31st is scheduled for 7:00 PM. If discussion goes longer that one hour, it will need to be continued because fire department is scheduled for 8:00 PM.

Sewer Pump Station Labor

Jim expressed concern about discrepancies in time it takes for highway department to check pump stations. Sewer department pays highway \$14K per year, \$15K proposed for 2013. At least one time, two workers checked pump station and per clock were there for total of less than ten minutes. The tasks that should be performed at each visit **take one to two hours to complete; the department is being charged full hours even when time clock says otherwise.**

John said that a 30 day period should be looked at so commission is assured that work is being done. **Tom requested that commissioners get copy of the hand written list of tasks that Jim said was given to Town Employees 3 years ago. This way, whoever goes into the pump stations has to sign it off on tasks everytime they go to the station and department can document, by name, who did what when and that in fact it was done.**

Currently, Steve Elliott is responsible for oversight; if he is unable to supervise, then Mike Bergeron may be asked to supervise.

Commissioners agreed to look into this further and take whatever action is needed to ensure that the job is being done, per specs. Follow up discussion will take place on February 28th.

88 **Milford Waster water treatment report**

89 All sewer commissioners signed the letter / report. Will be mailed to the facility.

91 **Discuss alternatives to PSNH for power generation for Sewer and Water**

92 Tom raised this discussion to see whether alternatives to PSNH could help reduce annual electric
93 utility expense. PSNH has highest rate for power generation in state. The W-L Coop has switched to
94 Hess energy and is already seeing a savings. The Town had considered changing from PSNH to another
95 supplier (Hess) but due to a billing issue (Town was being double billed) they decided to stay with
96 PSNH.

97 On a motion by John, second by Dan, Tom will look into power generation alternatives for both
98 sewer and water and report back on Feb 28th. Unanimous approval by both commissions.

100 **Other business –**

101 During the recent survey and camera work on the Maple Street sewer line, it was found that the
102 sewer line from the Sacred Heart Church is not connected to the stub in the street; rather the sewer line
103 discharges into the underground brook behind the building, an unsanitary condition in violation of
104 codes. On a motion by Tom, second by John, the sewer commission will send a letter to the Diocese of
105 Manchester advising that they must immediately correct this situation or face restrictions or limitations
106 on using the building. (The selectmen are aware of the problem and support the Sewer department
107 taking this action.) Unanimous approval by the sewer commissioners.

108 It is very important that the church remedy the problems **before** the town considers accepting the
109 property. Jim said that there will be meeting at the church (with the fire marshall and others) to review
110 sprinkler requirements and issues the town needs to be aware of if it's considering accepting the
111 building.

113 **Sewer and Water Rate changes –**

114 John did not want to have drastic changes to the sewer rate or structure but agreed that a modest flat
115 rate increase might be acceptable. Tom said he had researched six sewer utilities in area that are
116 regulated by PUC; he found that Wilton's rate is very low in comparison. Jim's scenarios were
117 reviewed from a sewer department standpoint.

119 John asked if there is any money in sewer department reserves or savings account. Jim thought it
120 may be about \$60K but he can't verify this until 'due to/from' accounts are published (available from
121 town hall).

123 **BMSI** – Jim shared information from BMSI about ways to make customer billing information
124 readily available to the commissioners and perhaps enable the commissions to produce their own bills.
125 The majority of the commissioners do not want to make changes now but agree that it is important that
126 Jim, or anyone dealing with customer calls about the bills, needs to have ready access. Efforts will be
127 made to work more closely with Jane Farrell and her staff to accomplish this. Although Jim had
128 printouts of his correspondence from Tina at BMSI to give to all the commissioners, he was asked to
129 forward her e-mail for their review.

131 Jim expressed concerns about the most recent bill that was sent out – this was the readings from the
132 end of September that didn't go out until December 10 or so. There were numerous errors in the bills
133 even though 14 corrections were made in October when Pete Elwell transferred meter reads into the
134 system. Jim was also concerned that several errors weren't brought to the commissioners' attention until
135 tonight, when all the problem accounts were reviewed and abatements or adjusted tonight.

Jane will return from vacation on Feb. 1st – Tom agreed to speak with her to determine that the next bill (with meter reads from end of December) will go out promptly; and also to recommend cross-training of the staff so that they can produce reports for the sewer and water departments when she is not there. Hopefully, any problems with the billing are now resolved and shouldn't be an issue with the bill for the December reading; if there is still a problem, then the commissions can consider alternatives. In the meantime, Jim will forward the e-mail from Tina to the commissioners and, if they want, they can invite Tina to meet with them and Jane to give everyone a clearer understanding of what the BMSI can do for sewer and water.

There being no other business on the sewer department agenda, John moved, Tom seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. Sewer commissioners unanimously agreed. John left the meeting.

Jim called the Water Commission meeting to order at 8:25 PM.

Vote to transfer money to Capital Reserve accounts as approved (and Treasurer has been directed to do)

Tom moved, Dan seconded to approve transfer as the Water Commission directed the Treasurer do in their letter of Jan. 17th. Unanimous approval. (We can confirm with Mark Whitehill on Monday that this has been done.)

Dakota Group (Pine Valley Mills project) –

Commissioners unanimously agreed to sign two originals of their letter / agreement with Dakota Partners. These will be mailed to Dakota for their acceptance; an original signed agreement to be returned to the Wilton Water Works.

Sewer and Water Billings (December readings)

Tom confirmed his intent to speak with Jane on Feb 1st to determine exactly when these bills would go out and to relay to her the need for there to be someone in the office who can produce reports for the commissions in her absence.

Water Rate Increases

Tom got rates from several water utilities in area including those regulated by PUC. As with sewer rates, Wilton's rates are low in comparison. He said he would go on record as generally in favor of small, incremental increases to be effective with the readings January through March 2013 and that commission should set the rate at the February 28th meeting. In the meantime, the commissioners should review the scenarios from Jim. The Water Commissioners unanimously agreed to set the new water at the February 28 meeting. (The rate should be a combination of base rate and usage. Jim and Tom (sewer commissioners) also agreed that any increase to the sewer rates should also be voted upon at the February meeting.

Water Superintendent report

Mike not here; he will be asked to the next meeting and will be first on the agenda.

There was some concern about purchases made around Christmas that could have waited until 2013.

Consideration of a spending policy will be made for Mike; it will set limits above which will require the Water Commission's pre-authorization or approval.

182 There was a truck breakdown (Aero Trucking Company) on January 16th at the Everett Well at which
183 Mike assisted the driver. The truck was leaking antifreeze on the driveway to Everett Well. As this
184 could be hazardous to the water supply, Mike called Jim who in turn contacted Emery & Garrett, water
185 consultants about the spill. Dan Tinkham, the engineer, advised that cleaning up the spill (with
186 absorbent pads, etc. was appropriate; should not be a danger to the well. The ground was frozen so no
187 antifreeze got into the soil; Mike also burned the antifreeze and swept it up. Jim created a bill for
188 Mike's time and materials; the Wilton Police were called to document the incident. The trucking
189 company was notified; they said the bill would be taken care of promptly.

190 Mike spent about four hours assisting the driver, resulting in his time going over 40 hours for the
191 week. Everyone is very pleased with Mike's performance; he is a real asset to the commission. In the
192 future, the commission does want to be more aware of Mike's and Carl's hours.

193 Mike will be encouraged to come to the monthly meetings to keep the commission informed about
194 his activities. He will be on the agenda early in the evening as he is usually attending after a full day's
195 work.

196
197 **Notification procedure for Water Service shutoffs for water breaks.**

198 There is no formal policy; at the very least, the town office should be notified when this happens so
199 that they can respond when customers call because service is interrupted. Also, Tom gave a scanner to
200 Town Office so this may help when situations like this arise.

201
202 **Other business –**

203 Tom moved, Dan seconded to reduce the number of water units at the Draper Building, 148 Main Street,
204 from 5 units to 2 because of the reduced usage at the property. Unanimously approved.

205
206 Tom moved, Jim seconded to reduce the number of sewer units at the Draper Building, 148 Main Street,
207 from 5 units to 2 because of the reduced usage at the property. Sewer Commissioners Jim and Tom
208 unanimously approved.

209
210 There being no other business, the motion by Tom, second by Dan to adjourn the Water Commission
211 meeting at 9:30 was unanimously approved.

212
213 Next meeting – January 31 7:00 PM Sewer Department bond hearing

214 Feb 28, 2013 6:30 PM regular monthly meeting Sewer & Water

215
216 Respectfully submitted,

217 Joanna K. Eckstrom, Clerk

218 Transcriber 1/26/13